

JAPAN VIEWS THE PACIFIC

CONVERSATIONS ON VITAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUES
WITH VISCOUNT KATO, PREMIER, AND BARON
SHIDEHARA, FOREIGN MINISTER IN THE
IMPERIAL JAPANESE CABINET

By
EDWARD PRICE BELL

THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
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VISCOUNT KATO, PREMIER OF JAPAN.



KATO'S APPROVAL OF THE INTERVIEW

CABINET
DU
PRÉSIDENT MINISTRES
TOKIO

June 4th 1925

Dear Mr. Bell,

I have read your kind letter, enclosing the interview with myself, which I have read with much interest. It is very accurate and I hope it may be of some service in clearing up the ideas which we Japanese entertain regarding their relations with the outside world. I enclose my photograph at your request.

With very kind regards
and my hearty wishes for
your success. I am

Yours faithfully
T. Kato

JAPAN'S PREMIER SPEAKS

"Peace is a favorite theme with me," said Viscount Takaaki Kato, prime minister of Japan, as he sat talking slowly and quietly in a handsome drawing room of English type at the official residence, Tokyo. "Peace and its fruits," thoughtfully went on the calm, long-faced, refined, simple-spoken statesman, "increasingly and, I believe, with growing promise of success, inspire the efforts of governments and peoples everywhere."

Our special theme was the peace of the Pacific.

"It touches us, of course, with distinctive intimacy," continued the prime minister, taking a cigarette, holding it for a moment, lighting it and smoking unhurriedly. "To the peace of the Pacific we Japanese are devoted. We are devoted to it ardently. It never will be broken by a wanton act by Japan. I see no warrant for prophecies of a warlike initiative in the Pacific from any source. Who could contemplate such an event without horror?"

Peoples Drawing Closer Together.

"You think, then, the cause of peace is making headway?"

"I do. Its importance is better understood than in former times. Last year saw a great improvement in international relations. Europe set her feet on the path of revival and prosperity. International co-operation and reciprocal confidence were shown in the unraveling of the tangled skein of reparations. Public men of powerful states added to their knowledge of world affairs. Examination of national situations and points of view left peoples less far apart in understanding and sympathy. Only educa-

tion of this kind is necessary to the consolidation of peace."

"What do you think of the press of the world in relation to the struggle for peace?"

"I think its power and duty enormous. I am appealing on every suitable occasion for journalistic support of the persons and the institutions whose aim is peace. Newspapers are among the most vital agencies of humanity. Food, water and air scarcely affect human life more widely or essentially, for newspapers afford spiritual and intellectual stimulation and sustenance for the masses of the world. Pure newspapers, informed and honest newspapers, generous and fearless newspapers, it probably is not too much to say, would insure the moral and mental health of nations, and nations morally and mentally healthy would have no desire to go to war."

Viscount Kato's Wide Experience.

Speaking was a statesman and diplomatist of large experience, born of a Samurai family of Nagoya in 1860, graduated at law from the Imperial University of Tokyo, trained in the official hierarchy of Japan, a crown member of the house of peers, twice a member of the house of commons, four times minister of foreign affairs, leader of the Kenseikai party formed by the late Prince Katsura, and for many years Japanese ambassador to London, where the late King Edward decorated him with the knight commandership of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

It was a pleasure to study the man and his personality as he smoked and

talked. He has the forehead of a thinker. His hair is cut rather short and is gray about the temples. He has a small gray mustache; otherwise his face is smooth. His black eyebrows are silvering at the ends. His eyes are dark, serene, reflective, friendly and frequently humorous. He often smiles, sometimes chuckles and never makes a gesture of the hands. If he has troubles or anxieties he does not show them; there is no rift in his composure. Some idea of his nature may be gained from his affectionate esteem of Lord Grey of Fallodon, whom he regards as a statesman of surpassing sanity and good will.

Japan Wants Only Peace with America

"It puzzles me that Japan's peaceful disposition should be questioned by any one," said the viscount. "We enjoyed an unbroken peace of three centuries. Its matchless blessing, therefore, we know. We know how it furthers science and art, how it elevates the soul of a people, how it promotes their individual and social welfare and what impetus it gives to the progress of ordered freedom. War is fatal to ordered freedom. This fact Japan understands, and Japan loves ordered freedom. War resembles an earthquake. War is, in a sense, an earthquake; it shatters the liberties of men, sets fire to their possessions, destroys their lives. Japan does not like earthquakes. True, she has fought two great wars, but they were wars of defense—not a trace of militaristic aggression in either of them."

"What should your excellency say specifically about Japano-American relations?"

"I should say first, and with all possible emphasis, that Japan wants these relations kept on a basis of firm friendship, and will neglect no step to that end."

"How about our naturalization, land, and immigration laws?"

"Touching these and all other matters that may come up between the United States and Japan, this country proposes nothing and contemplates nothing but friendly discussion. Friendly discussion is becoming the rule of the world. It is educative. It is morally powerful. It is a thousandfold better for clearing the international air, for unveiling truth and justice, than are the dust and smoke of battle. Japan depends upon time, friendship, argument, and conscience to right any wrong from which she and other honest nations may suffer.

Grieved by Certain American Laws.

"Certain American laws have surprised and grieved the Japanese people, all the more because the Japanese long have felt that America was a seat of especial friendship toward them. It was not a practical thing the thing which hurt. It was a sentimental thing, and sentiment plays a large part in Japanese life, as, I suppose, in the life of every advanced people. Our citizens, prizing their exceptional historical ties with America, believing themselves exponents of the ideals of the American republic, devoted students of American customs, achievements, and culture, and feeling they had won a place in the front rank of civilized powers, naturally were shocked and pained when they realized that America appeared to regard them as deserving of adverse discrimination among the nationalities of the world.

Japan Wishes to Keep Its Citizens.

"It was, I repeat, a sentimental matter. Nothing practical upon which we had set our hearts had been taken away from us. No wide door of opportunity had been closed against us. We merely were wounded in our feelings. Our friends had done something we did not expect and could not help judging unjust. If there was popular

resentment in Japan for a time, it quickly subsided, for the impression spread that the heart of America was not unfriendly to Japan, and that rational discussion finally would redress the sentimental balance between the two countries. Talk of a league of white nations, presumably directed against Japan among others, and of American naval maneuvers and military intentions in the Pacific, disturbed our people slightly, but that unrest also passed without harmful consequences.

"Japan remains friendly to the United States and expects a favorable issue of all intergovernmental conversations and negotiations affecting the permanent relations of the two countries. Concerning naturalization, I always have been opposed to it—opposed, I mean, to pressing other governments to naturalize Japanese subjects. Sentimentally, of course, there is an objection to a refusal of naturalization on the ground of political origin or of race, but personally I never could bring myself to urge something involving the expatriation of my fellow-countrymen. I want to conserve our population, not open the way for its loss to our commonwealth.

Disloyalty of Resident Aliens.

"To antialien land laws in Japan I always have been opposed. Happily, such legislation exists here no more. It never was needed, for the excessive dearness of Japanese land precluded its passing on a large scale into the hands of foreigners. In Europe and America land is sold by the acre; here it is sold by the square foot. If there were danger, for example, of a considerable acreage in America falling to the ownership of non-American Japanese, or of other immigrants of non-American citizenship, I suppose legislation would be advisable to protect the native patrimony. But there is only a handful of such Japanese in your country, and this handful will not increase appreciably.

"Exaggeration, in our view, consistently has marked the anti-Japanese propaganda in the United States. Misleading statistics, as we think, have

been employed for prejudicial and alarmist purposes. There has been a false attribution of sentiments and motives to Japanese individuals and to the Japanese government. It has been said that in no circumstances can a Japanese immigrant, or even a Japanese born in the United States, be instinctively and unalterably loyal to the American flag. It has been charged in Californian propagandist literature that the Japanese government retains control over the Japanese in America and countenances their secret disloyalty to the country of their adoption or birth.

Japan's Attitude Toward Emigrants.

"Very earnestly do I wish exaggeration and misstatement relative to this question might be avoided. I wish it could be discussed with no passion except a passion for the truth. That the Japanese in the United States are disloyal to that country, or that they are capable of desiring evil in any form to overtake it, I cannot believe. And one thing I know: it is unthinkable and impossible that any Japanese government should support, or should fail to condemn, any sentiment or agitation by the Japanese in America unfavorable to the institutions or the welfare of the American people. Such sentiment or agitation would ruin those beneficent relations which Japan is resolved to nurture between America and herself.

"On the question of so-called dual citizenship, I am in agreement with American thought. In terms and in fact, dual citizenship is an irreconcilable contradiction. Citizenship enjoins singleness of allegiance and fidelity. It is perfectly patriotic, of course, for the citizens of one country to be of service to the citizens of another, for benefits flowing across frontiers are world benefits, and every nation is a part of our interdependent world. What I am trying to say is that we all can be good world neighbors and at the same time good single-allegiance citizens. But, as the world stands, it is impossible to conceive of dual citizenship as a practical political principle. Japan has abandoned her law in conflict with this view. Japanese born in America, so

far as we are concerned, may elect Japanese citizenship; they may not elect both Japanese and American.

Japanese Love for the Homeland.

"As regards the question of emigration, our whole attitude—the attitude of the Japanese nation—seems to be misunderstood in many quarters abroad. It seems to be supposed that millions of our people are eager to leave home. It seems to be supposed that our population is so great, and is growing so rapidly, that spacious outlets must be found for it in foreign lands. There is no justification for this belief. It falsifies both the feelings of our people and the conditions in Japan. If any nation loves its homeland, the Japanese love Japan—love it in general, and love their own special parts in particular. They not only do not want to emigrate, but do not want to migrate from spots where they were born to other places within their own country. Japan's territory, home and colonial, is sufficient for her needs for at least a century, and probably two.

"Does this mean we have a sparsely peopled country? On the contrary, we have a densely peopled country, and our population is increasing at the rate of perhaps 700,000 a year. In respect of population as related to territory, our position is like that of England, Wales, or Belgium. Japan proper, with an area of one-twentieth of that of the United States, is the home of half as many people—56,000,000—as inhabit your immense continental territory, and the total population of our empire is close on 80,000,000. That our national problem, our problem of food, clothing and shelter, is a momentous one requires no statement.

Japan Able to Support Its People.

"But we are not appalled by it. And we are not driven by it to cast covetous eyes upon other peoples' territories—still less to dream of war as a means of solution. We are crowded in this island and colonial empire, but we are far from the end of either our room or our resources. It is not altogether

a question of how much arable land you have; it also is a question of how you cultivate it. Japan cultivates her acres intensively. She makes one tan, or a quarter of an acre, feed one mouth; she makes an acre feed four. Congestion exists principally in the southern and southwestern areas. People can migrate from these areas to the north, where there is more room, and they will do so when they must; they will not do so before.

"There is ample, if not abundant, opportunity for agriculture in Hokkaido, Korea, Formosa and Japanese Sakhalien. To any one or all of these territories our people can and will move when the pressure of population and economic need becomes strong enough to induce them to leave their homes. We also hope there will be opportunities for Japanese farmers in Siberia—a contingency dependent upon the settled relations that may come about between Japan and Russia. Aside from these agricultural prospects, Japanese skill and labor have much to anticipate in the way of productive occupation. We can become more highly industrialized. We can extend our commerce. Our textiles, for instance, already are selling in a wide Asian market, and we have our fisheries, forests and mines—all capable of expansion.

Conserving the Strength of a Nation.

"My point is that those observers who represent Japan, because of her relatively small productive territory and her large and growing population, as a peril to world peace either are ignorant of both human and natural realities in Japan, or are actuated by studied injustice and enmity toward this country. Our people, as to the vast majority, do not and never will want to emigrate. If they ask the United States and other countries to deal with them on a plane of equality with other civilized peoples—and the Japanese would not be Japanese if they did not ask this—it is not with any purpose of inundating foreign lands with a Japanese flood. Our people live a simple, hardworking life, but a selfrespecting life not devoid of

joy, and they probably are as well satisfied as is any other division of the human family.

"Emigration. We have been discussing it from the Japanese point of view—discussing it in the concrete. Now let us look at it in the abstract. What does emigration mean? Does it mean the integration or the disintegration of a people? Does it mean a consolidation or a dissipation of national strength? On what theory can a nationality perpetuate itself and augment its power by scattering itself over the world? To me, in such a conception, we have a strange idea of strategy. I am against emigration. Only the more daring, enterprising, and capable persons are apt to emigrate. To encourage an efflux of its best blood is, to my mind, an extraordinary way of building up a nation ambitious to play a splendid role in history. I wonder if we sometimes do not flatter ourselves in fancying that alien peoples long to quit their own shores for ours."

One enjoyed the twinkle in Viscount Kato's eyes.

The Manhood Test in Immigration.

"It rather would seem," I ventured to remark, "that, if Japan fought a foreign war to get a place for her people outside of Japan, she might be forced to fight a civil war to compel them to go and occupy it."

"There are many things more improbable," replied the prime minister.

"What broad principle, in your view, should lie at the base of an immigration policy?"

"Immigration policies, I think, should take account, not of religion or nationality or race or color or geographical distribution, but of intrinsic human merit—qualities of manhood and womanhood, soundness of mind and body, and disposition toward institutions of law, order, and civil liberty. Japan admits the right, even recognizes the duty, of every state to regulate immigration within its borders. What we do not regard as right, and what we deem ill adapted to promote that interracial and international goodwill which permanent peace builders so highly esteem, is the principle of

discrimination among races *qua* races. To this principle we object. But we are not going to make war about it. We merely are going to argue about it. War will not set the world right; sincere, courteous, well-grounded, illuminating argument may."

Japan Doesn't Want the Philippines.

"So you are not going to seize the Philippines or Hawaii?"

Viscount Kato's face took on a look of hearty amusement.

"Ethics and prudence apart," said he, "we want neither archipelago, nor anything else that is America's."

"You have noted the proclamation of certain politicians in Washington that the world is to have a new Gibraltar?"

"Yes."

"That it is to be in the Pacific?"

"Yes."

"That it is to be Hawaii?"

"Yes."

"What do you think of it?"

"Domestic matters in Japan leave us no time to deal with domestic matters in America," said the prime minister.

"Officially, Japan never has been worried by the movement of American warships in the Pacific?"

"Why should there be any international concern about the movement of friendly warships anywhere?" asked the Japanese statesman. And he added: "American warships in the Pacific, British warships in the Pacific, Japanese warships in the Pacific—we consider them all symbols of civilization and peace in the Pacific."

The Question of Asiatic Alliances.

"There is in America, I think, considerable interest in Japan's relations with Russia, and in speculations respecting what is termed an 'Asian bloc,' possibly inimical to the best relations between Japan and the United States."

"Asian bloc," said Viscount Kato, speaking with more than usual deliberation, "is a phrase with no actual or imaginable correlative in fact. It is a disembodied phrase. It is one of those phrases which float about the intellectual world as tenuous mists

float about the physical world. 'Bloc' in the sense suggested, implies some kind of affinity, of homogeneity, of structural likeness, as a binding substance among the component parts. There is no such quality or substance for drawing or holding together an 'Asian bloc' of the sort suggested in the theory of an Asian aggregation of power opposed to the United States.

"Japan is individual. Her psychology, like her volcanic islands, stands apart from the mainland of Asia. We are as different from the Chinese as we are from the Americans or the British, and who has detected any identity between the Russians and the Japanese? If we try to establish neighborly relations with China and with Russia, as we always are trying to do, it is not because our hearts have turned away from our occidental friends in the Pacific; it is because we believe in international amity as a general objective of statesmanship. 'Orientation' is a stock word in the vocabulary of international politics. We hear of 'orientations' this way and that. If 'orientation' means a tendency toward international reconciliation, Japan wishes to 'orient' in all directions.

Commercial Relations with America.

"Our point of view is illustrated by the position of England, which looks east and west. English intercourse, political, social and economic, with the continent of Europe—her friendship with the European nations—does not detach her from the Atlantic nor lessen her desire for Atlantic friendships. Japan has inevitable relations with her neighbors of the Asiatic mainland. She is on good terms with China as a result of mutual consideration. Urgent territorial, economic and social exigencies required a resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia, though Japan has no sympathy with sovietism as a political and social system and will permit no communist propaganda in this country. I cannot state too strongly that our conciliatory and constructive policy toward the Orient entails no reverse policy toward the Occident.

"America, particularly, is not a country Japan would choose to alienate. Aside from our historical, cultural and aspirational relationships, and aside from our correlation to the problems of world society—to all of which Japan attaches importance—the United States is of immense concern to us commercially and financially. She is our best customer—buys annually more than \$250,000,000 worth of our silk alone. Do you think we are likely, in sport or malice, to begin hurling shrapnel or high explosive shells at that market? We need American capital and are getting it. Could we afford to lose the confidence of American wealth? On the other hand, who can spend a day in Japan without appreciating Japan's commercial value to the United States? American materials and manufactures form the foundation of our life. Who but a madman, American or Japanese, would dream of thrusting a sword through this interlacement?"

Co-operation by the Nations.

"You do not believe in international blocs?"

"I believe in a single human sodality."

"In the league of nations?"

"In the master idea of the league of nations—that of an inquiring, reasoning, justice-seeking world, inflexibly bent upon settling its questions and directing its affairs by moral means and not by violence. True, the league takes cognizance of matters beyond the range of Japanese interest and knowledge. Our people, for example, do not know what or where Riga is. But they understand the grand aim of the league—to promote the health, prosperity and peace of the world—and they are wholeheartedly for that aim."

"You are a nationalist?"

"All Japanese are nationalists, and intense nationalists, as is the wont of island peoples."

"You do not believe in a super-state?"

"No. But I believe in independent states working together honestly and

generously for the common weal. Such work, of course, necessitates clear and candid statements of national points of view, and no statement of this kind should be taken as offensive or as implying a recourse in any circumstances to force majeure. In other words, every state should be allowed to put forward its case as fully and powerfully as possible, without incurring suspicion of a hidden purpose to pass from unsuccessful arguments to war. International candor is indispensable to international understanding and a frictionless internationalism."

Culture and Sound Leadership.

"What is your opinion of classical culture as an aid to the concord of peoples?"

"Assuming 'classical culture' to signify a high development of the human mind and soul, I suppose one could not exaggerate its worth to civilization. Intelligence and sympathy are qualities of inestimable moment. Our world is shrinking rapidly through mechanical audacity and skill. Diverse systems and customs and temperaments are meeting at close quarters. Superficial differences tend to create confusion of thought, irritation, suspicion, alarm. Penetration is useful. Fellow feeling, compassion, humanism, are useful. But 'the classics,' in Japan, does not necessarily mean Latin and Greek. Our written language, you know, is not by alphabet, but by ideograph. Of these characters we have some 10,000, so that our students generally have little time to spend upon the Greek and Roman languages and literatures. However, our educational ideals are high and our faith in humanistic culture second to none."

"You favor aristocratic leadership?"

"If you mean leadership by the best—yes. And the whole of society can and ought to aspire and strive to be of the best. Upon the real aristocracy, the intellectual and moral noblesse, of a community, one need not say, rest especial obligations of leadership and public duty."

"Is Japan becoming more democratic?"

"Undoubtedly. Possibly our people are disposed to go ahead too rapidly. There is little conservatism in Japan—no such repugnance to change as is found in England. If a thing seems good to the Japanese, they say, 'Let us adopt it at once.' They are prone to be too quick to reject the old and take the new. We now have universal suffrage and shall see how it works. If there are dangers, I have no great fears. Predisposed to advance swiftly, our people are not destructionists. They are loyal to the throne, proud of their traditions, and passionately devoted to the vision of a useful and honorable place for their empire in the family of free and peaceful nations.

"Freedom, I think, we understand. We understand it is not anarchy or license. We understand, on the contrary, that anarchy and license annihilate freedom. This realization is imbedded in the Japanese consciousness. Therefore, I am not alarmed by the strongly progressive nature of our citizens. I am not alarmed by their new enthusiasm for individual liberty and responsibility. I am not afraid of universal suffrage. I am persuaded our liberties will deepen our loyalty and invigorate our patriotism. For, after all, how can a man be truly loyal, truly patriotic, unless he be free?"

Japanese Are Like Other People.

"Do you discover, now and again, misinterpretations of Japanese character?"

Viscount Kato chuckled.

"I read in books some interesting observations on Japanese life," said he. "I read in English and in American books that Japanese babies never cry. Those of us who have Japanese babies know better. I read in books that the Japanese people are always cheerful. In reality, of course, they are like their babies in that when they have something to be glad about they are glad, and when they have something to be sad about they are sad. We have pleasant and unpleasant people, strong-

minded and feeble-minded people, wise men and fools, saints and rogues. In external pigmentation we are more or less different from other sections of humanity, but in internal pigmentation we seem to be about the same."

"You believe mankind to be spiritually of one kin?"

"I do."

Preserving Japanese Civilization.

"Do you believe in interracial marriage?"

"I do not."

"And your reason?"

"Because I think the overwhelming weight of advantage and happiness lies on the side of racial integrity. Biological consequences do not seem to me to be the main consideration. It is not chiefly a question of physiology or animality. It is a sociological and psychological question. It is a question of emotion and mentality, of where and how one lives, of countless associative subtleties. It is a human question."

"You would preserve Japanese civilization by preserving the Japanese?"

"Yes. We feel our civilization, so preserved, has its own distinct value for, and its own distinct place in, the life of the world. Japan never will use her power as a weapon of selfish aggression—the most stupid act a nation can commit—but for the preserva-

tion of her Japanese heritage she will make any sacrifice. To the perfection of this heritage our sister nations have contributed much. These contributions we gladly acknowledge. Our one desire is to go forward in equal honor with those nations, each placing its special gifts at the service of all."

Mirroring a Statesman's Mind.

Our conversation, to me of absorbing interest, was at an end. It had been uninterrupted and had lasted two hours. Viscount Kato accompanied me into the large hallway adjoining the drawing room and stood smiling and bowing, in the charming Japanese way, until I was gone. I felt I had been in the presence of a man whose words were a faithful mirror of his mind. I could understand why Lord Grey took pleasure in his company and had every confidence in his character, and why Viscount Kato's ambassadorial work in England, where he laid the foundations of Anglo-Japanese friendship, ranks high in the diplomatic annals of Japan.

How long he will occupy the great position of prime minister of the Japanese empire I dare not predict. But I do venture the prophecy that so long as he remains prime minister his acts will not belie the foregoing exposition of his views. Viscount Kato admits that Japan has fools as well as wise men. I think he is one of the wise ones.

Views of Japan's Foreign Minister

Baron Shidehara, foreign minister of Japan, received me with friendly dignity in his beautiful private room at the foreign office in Tokyo. He advanced from his desk to meet me and shook hands firmly.

"I am glad to meet you," said he, smiling like an old friend as he inclined both well-set head and sturdy body—a flash at one and the same instant of culture and of force.

"This racial question between America and Japan is always changing," said the statesman, speaking in pure English, after we had sat down beneath a wide, lofty window. "It is in a position now markedly different from that which it occupied when I first gave serious thought to it. Do you chance to remember what were called the 'Morris-Shidehara conversations' in Washington?"

"Very well," said I.

"Those conversations were carried on with earnestness. Both Mr. Morris and myself desired nothing else so much as a solution of the Americano-Japanese racial problem satisfactory to both parties. Our discussions were without any feeling except the feeling of mutual respect and friendship. It was said that the problem turned upon the assimilability or unassimilability of the Japanese as members of the American social community.

Testing Japanese Assimilability.

"Touching this question Mr. Morris and I agreed that there had not been time enough to determine whether the Japanese were or were not assimilable in America, as the British and the Scandinavians, for instance, have proved to be in that country. It had been scarcely more than a quarter of a century—the 'Morris-Shidehara conversations' took place five or six years ago—since the Japanese entered America in appreciable numbers. There had not been time to tell whether they would or would not turn out good Americans.

"How," we asked ourselves, 'can a reliable test be made?' We agreed that a practicable plan would be virtually to stop further Japanese immigration in America until the Japanese already there could be given a chance to demonstrate their quality in respect of assimilation into the general American social body. At this point I emphasized what I deemed a substantial condition, namely, that while the test was proceeding every encouragement be given the Japanese in America to adopt the American standpoint and way of life if they could.

The Alien Element in Japan.

"I pointed out to my American colleague a grave mistake made by Japan with reference to an alien element in our population. This element presents a curious analogy in connection with the problem of the Japanese immigrants in America. I mean a special class of people who are social outcasts. There are said to be 1,200,000 scattered over Japan. Their origin is uncertain and mixed. Some are descended from Chinese and Korean immigrants and some from aborigines. Most of them were originally and for generations engaged in tanning and butchers' work, considered by Buddhists to be unclean.

"I told Mr. Morris about these people, how we ostracized them in old days, how we drove them into settlements apart. I had seen our people doing it. I myself, as a boy, had had my irresponsible part in it. Persons of this class used to appear in front of our house and seek work as menders of our clogs or wooden shoes. They were not permitted to come inside our fence. We threw our clogs out to them, they did their work, threw the clogs back, and we tossed the pay into their hands. We called them unassimilable, while ourselves denying them all opportunity of assimilation.

BARON SHIDEHARA, JAPANESE MINIS-
TER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

To Mr E. Price Bell.



With kind regards
K. Shidehara

Tokyo June 4, 1925.

The Error of Making Outcasts.

"We made a mistake. Our course was politically, socially and economically wrong as well as un-Christian and inhuman. These persons are now treated in every way as our equals. But the antagonism fostered by centuries cannot be swept away in a day. They are still with us, still living in their separate communities, still in their hearts hostile to us, still a problem to vex social relations, perplex statesmanship and grieve humanitarianism. We should have reached out to welcome them and not to cast them away. If we had done that, they long ago would have merged in our community beyond all trace, and to-day there would be no irritating problem in Japan such as this particular class presents."

Baron Shidehara was thinking and speaking carefully, manifestly searching his mind for his real meaning and for exact words to express it, imparting to his remarks precision and solidity. From time to time he looked into my eyes as if to say, 'Are you interested—do you understand me?' His face now and again wore an unrelenting expression, but as the talk proceeded I found him capable of smiling delightedly and of laughing in that fashion which springs only from the liveliest sense of humor. I found also he could relax into simple, easy narrative, as will appear later in his story of the colloquies between himself and the late Lord Bryce. Thoroughly Japanese is Baron Shidehara in physiognomy, temperament, manner and patriotism, tingling with the spirit of to-day, but ruled by deliberation and sagacity.

American Attitude Toward Japanese.

"My point of view as expressed to Mr. Morris," continued Baron Shidehara, "was that America, in dealing with her Japanese population, well might consider our mistake respecting a certain part of our population. It seemed to me, and I so stated, that an attitude of sympathy, of welcome, of invitation to assimilation, might yield a result diametrically different from that of an attitude of coldness or per-

secution or ostracism. Parenthetically, I would say that I personally have been surprised by what I have seen in evidence of Japanese assimilability to Americanism. I have seen in Tokyo a group of American-born Japanese children who amazed me by their likeness, in dress, speech, and manners, to American children. These little visitors of Japanese blood could not speak a word of Japanese.

"Your ambassador, Mr. Morris," the foreign minister went on, "raised two points in criticism of conditions in Japan relative to the relations of America and this country. He liked neither our law of nationality nor our law of property affecting aliens. At that time a Japanese subject, wherever born, remained a Japanese subject in the view of Japanese law unless and until such subject, by his own act, renounced his Japanese citizenship and adopted another. Now, under American law, a person born in America becomes an American citizen without any act of his own—acquires American citizenship automatically by virtue of birth in the country.

Doing Away with Dual Citizenship.

"It followed, therefore, that American-born Japanese inherited two citizenships, Japanese and American. Mr. Morris objected to this dual allegiance, and his objection seemed to me reasonable. His position concerning our law of property I also felt able to regard not unfavorably. On my return to Japan, and on becoming minister for foreign affairs, I recommended to the diet an alteration of our laws of nationality and property in accordance with the point of view urged upon me by Mr. Morris. My recommendation prevailed. Our laws were changed. As to Japanese emigration to the United States, we stopped it in conformity with the terms of the 'gentlemen's agreement.'

"You then felt," I remarked, "that Japan had done all she could to clear the way for the test of Japanese assimilability in America and to advance toward a complete Japano-American accord?"

"That is how we felt."

"And what should you say of the American response?"

When Americans Make Mistakes.

"I will tell you a story," replied Baron Shidehara, his air of close thought passing and a reminiscent smile breaking over his face. "I was in Washington when the American congress took action with reference to the Panama tolls question. Lord Bryce was British ambassador to Washington then. On the Sunday following the act of the congress I dropped in, as was my occasional wont, to see Lord Bryce at the British embassy. In the course of our desultory talk I said to Lord Bryce, 'Your objection to the tolls bill has been overruled.' 'Yes,' was his reply. 'What are you going to do about it?' I inquired.

"Lord Bryce looked at me calmly. 'Nothing,' said he. 'There is nothing to be done. There is no use in doing anything. The American people may make mistakes. They may commit injustices. But, in the end, they always of their own will put them right. It is in their history.' On our side—the side of Japan—things had not been going as we should have wished in California. Indeed, almost at the same time that the congress passed the toll the legislature of California passed the anti-alien land law. Presently Lord Bryce said to me, 'And what are you going to do about the California situation?' I replied instantly, 'We are going to do what you are going to do—nothing.' "

A Prophecy of Understanding.

After some unfeigned laughter, Baron Shidehara continued: "Shortly before the wise and delightful British statesman died, we chanced to meet again in Washington. He had come over to speak at the Institute of Politics in Williamstown. He ran down from New York to Washington to call upon some of his old friends at the state department, and we encountered each other in the reception room. We had a chat. It was of old times in the American capital. Panama tolls came

up. 'You see I was right,' said Lord Bryce. 'Yes,' I agreed, 'you were right about the Panama canal.' Lord Bryce glanced at me and we smiled. 'California,' said I, 'still awaits the fulfillment of your prophecy.'

"Do you think history," I inquired, "will prove Lord Bryce a bad prophet relative to Japan?"

"No," answered Baron Shidehara with emphasis. "We all in this country, or certainly those of us who know America, retain our confidence in her fundamental love, not only of justice, but of generosity. We believe that one day she will understand us. We believe that her distrust of us, so far as she has any such distrust, will disappear. We believe that a national American demand for justice and fairness and neighborliness toward the Japanese in the United States will sweep away all misrepresentation, all misunderstanding, and with them all discrimination by American citizens against the Japanese within their gates and the Japanese race as a race. There will be no trouble about it. Knowledge of facts and conscience will do the work. America and Japan will continue to stand side by side, with friendly sister nations, as guardians of the peace of the Pacific."

Japan's Views on Emigration.

"You have no ambition to 'swamp America' with your people?"

"We have no ambition to swamp any country with our people. We do not want to send America a single Japanese to whom she objects. That would not be good for her or us. It is sentiment and principle and devotion to the amity of peoples—not the wish or necessity of emigration—that actuate Japanese citizens and the Japanese government in respect of the discriminatory clause in the American immigration law."

"It has been reported in America that the 'real' Japan does not welcome the effort in America to have Japan included in the quota. Is this true?"

"It is entirely untrue."

"Is the immigration problem the only important problem between Japan and America?"

"It is the only one."

"Japan will press for the removal of all forms of discrimination against the Japanese people by whomsoever practiced?"

"In a friendly way—naturally."

Opposed to Provocative Alliances.

"Is it probable that obdurate occidental indifference to Japanese susceptibilities would issue in an Asian entente of some solidarity?"

"No. Such an entente would hold out no promise of what we are seeking, namely, all-round recognition of the principle of equality for our people."

"Would such an entente contravene tendencies toward a settled world peace?"

"Decidedly. Japan deprecates all segregative movements inimical to the aggregative interests of the world. I mean that we are opposed to the development of combinations of powers pursuing particular rather than general world aims. Such combinations, in our opinion, tend to build up the mental and material conditions of warlike conflict. Our conception parallels the general conception of the league of nations as we understand the league."

"Japan's dominant moral and intellectual forces are for universal and permanent peace?"

"Beyond all question."

On Bolsheviks and Bolshevism.

"Do you think Moscow hopes to exploit Japano-American difficulties favorably to its ideas of world-wide communism?"

"If it so hopes, it will be disappointed."

"Do you think Russian communism really intends, if it can, to destroy so-called capitalistic society?"

"Its constitution, I believe, contains a clause declaring such a purpose."

"Have you any kind or degree of sympathy with the bolshevists?"

"It is not my province to criticize principles of government in any foreign country. I can say, however, that bolshevism, so far as I can penetrate it, is utterly repugnant to the elemen-

tals of Japanese tradition and character. But I am not without a certain sympathetic feeling toward bolshevists as distinguished from bolshevism—toward the human beings, that is to say, who have sprung this unexampled and puzzling doctrine upon the world. Most of the bolshevist leaders are Jews. Their blood is the blood of a race long and cruelly persecuted. May not an error of judgment of the modern world, and an emotion, perhaps, of revenge, run in that blood?

The Product of Age-Long Tyrannies.

"Moreover, the Russians now in power are survivors or descendants of the age-long tyrannies of the czars. Their memories are bitter memories. They remember nothing but serfdom, bloody suppression, denial of human right, exile. How could they have what we should term a normal psychology? How could they be expected to feel anything but terror and enmity with reference to those political and economic systems which, in their imagination, resemble the regimes of the czars? May they not really believe that we should enslave and exploit them, if we could, and that consequently a passion on their part to extirpate us is a righteous passion?"

"I am not answering these questions; I am asking them. I do not understand bolshevist mentality. But I never try to understand anything without a sympathetic exploration of its background. My idea is to seek a cure for the destructive pathology of bolshevists, not by withdrawing from them, but by cautiously and prudently endeavoring to establish an educative intercourse with them. Non-bolshevist nations, I need not say, have no wish to wrong Russia, but every wish to see her orderly, prosperous and content, and to have her take her place in the peaceful concert of civilization."

Progressive Forces in Germany.

"Do you know of any national government or organized movement with aims prejudicial to Japano-American friendship?"

"Not now. China gave some evidence of such a disposition at the time of the Versailles conference, but I am aware of nothing of the sort in any quarter at present."

"Is any part of Japan sympathetic with the reactionary elements in Germany?"

"No, indeed."

"Do you anticipate any reactionary revival in Germany from Hindenburg's election?"

"No. My belief is that Germany will persist in the path of democracy and peace."

"Is Japan satisfied with the principle of the open door in China?"

"That principle cannot be too strictly enforced to suit us."

"It gives you natural advantages?"

"It gives us great natural advantages. Besides, it accords with our idea both of justice to China and of the universal welfare. International grasping for selfish advantage in China would threaten humanity with an immeasurable disaster."

Labor's International Interest.

"Is Japan free from the menace of internal subversive agitation?"

"Not free from it, but, I think, not seriously threatened, nor more threatened than any other great state. Government everywhere, of course, is beset with new problems in our growingly complex modern political and social existence. For instance, international labor attractions are a fresh concern of government. For the first time in Japan we have had a delegation from Japanese labor visiting the foreign office to protest against our measures for preserving order and protecting the rights of our nationals in

China. Our reply was that we were not interfering in the strikes as economic struggles but as developments dangerous to life and property. It is a new thing with us—this sign of local labor unrest without the faintest practical local interest. But we are not alarmed over it. I merely mention it as an illustration of the increasing weight of public-order burdens in every part of the world."

Friendship of the Pacific Powers.

Our last words—the last words of an interview that had occupied the best part of two hours—were relative to the Pacific. As we shook hands at parting, I said to Baron Shidehara:

"I may state that Japan values exceptionally an entente with the principal occidental Pacific powers?"

"You may state that with every assurance of accuracy. How highly I personally reckon an entente with the principal occidental Pacific powers is reflected in my pride that I had a part in drafting the four-power treaty at the Washington conference."

Baron Kijuro Shidehara, born in Osaka prefecture, aged 54, was graduated from the college of law of the Tokyo Imperial university. Entering the foreign office in 1896, he rose rung by rung until he became foreign minister in June, 1924. His diplomatic career has been long and honorable. In various capacities he has served in Washington, London, Antwerp and The Hague. From 1915 to 1919 he was vice-minister for foreign affairs. From 1919 to 1922 he won his great popularity at Washington as Japanese ambassador to the United States. His barony was the reward of his services in the great war.

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